

introduction to *American Studies: An Anthology* (2009) posit that contemporary American Studies is sustained in large part by a critique of the classical monolithic, or as termed by Wise, the “symbol-myth-image” view of American Studies scholarship.¹⁸⁴ They, along with many American Studies scholars of the past twenty years, focus on a shift within the American academy that deconstructs traditional narratives by adding different voices which had been excluded in traditional disciplinary work.¹⁸⁵

This approach however, as Russ Castronovo and Susan Gillman have pointed out, has in many ways remained bounded by traditional modes of inquiry. In “The Study of American Problems,” their introduction to their edited volume, *States of Emergency* (2009) they suggest that a new methodological approach rooted in what they term a spatiotemporal orientation to American “objects” would challenge the exceptionalist vision of traditional disciplinary bases and their influence in normative American Studies.¹⁸⁶ Much in tow with Lauter’s recommendation, the contributors to the volume work “from specific disciplinary constellations” but apply them in different ways to project a unique American Studies derived methodology. What informs this new thinking

184. See Janice A. Radway, Kevin K. Gaines, Barry Shank, and Penny Von Eschen, “Introduction,” in *American Studies: An Anthology*, eds., Idem (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 1-6.

185. They express that the “familiar American pantheon that included people like Jefferson, Adams, Lincoln, Hawthorne Melville, and James was enlarged and transformed by the addition of intellectuals like Margaret Fuller, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Jose Marti, Marcus Garvey, Anzia Tezierska, and Abraham Cahan.” Ibid, 3.

186. Russ Castronovo and Susan Gillman, “The Study of American Problems,” in *States of Emergency: The Object of American Studies*, eds. Idem (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 7-10. Relying on the philosophy of history of Walter Benjamin, Castronovo and Gillman explain that a methodologically sound American Studies should translate “the study of American problems into times and places that fail to abide by the regularities of U.S. history, the U.S. literary archive, or even the traditional interdisciplinary pairing of literature and history.” Ibid, 8. They use the term “object” to imply a sense of the thing studied as well as the method of studying it, while later offering a third sense, that of signaling disagreement with norms. See Ibid, 3-4; 13.